

# Jo Bonner

## THE WASHINGTON CYBER REPORT

315 Cannon House Office Building ★ Washington, DC 20515 ★ (202) 225-4931 ★ August 2004

### TOWN MEETINGS ON TAP FOR NEXT WEEK

Just a reminder that we'll be on the road next week for fourteen town hall meetings. Please refer to the schedule below to find a time and place that will work for you. I look forward to having the opportunity to visit and talk about issues of concern to the First District of Alabama.

#### Wednesday, August 25

8:00 a.m. - 9:00 a.m.

Dauphin Island, Town Hall

10:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m.

Eight Mile, Indian Springs Baptist

Church Fellowship Hall

11:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.

Satsuma, City Hall

1:00 p.m. - 2:00 p.m.

Bucks, White House Family

Restaurant

3:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.

Wagarville, Wagarville Nutrition

Center

4:30 p.m. - 5:30 p.m.

Grove Hill, Town Hall

#### Thursday, August 26

7:30 a.m. - 8:30 a.m.

Peterman, Peterman Baptist Church

Fellowship Hall

9:00 a.m. - 10:00 a.m.

Uriah, Country Kitchen

Highway 21

11:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.

Canoe, Canoe Civic Club

3:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.

East Brewton, City Hall

#### Friday, August 27

8:15 a.m. - 9:15 a.m.

Josephine, Volunteer Fire

Department

10:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m.

Bon Secour, Volunteer Fire

Department

2:00 p.m. - 3:00 p.m.

Point Clear, St. Francis at the Point

Episcopal Church

4:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m.

Stapleton, Volunteer Fire Department

### HIGHWAY BILL STILL IN CONFERENCE

The 1998 highway and transit law expired September 30, 2003. The Senate passed a \$318.9 billion measure in February while the House passed a \$283.2 billion version. The administration had proposed a \$256 billion bill and these funding level differences have been very difficult to reconcile.

House and Senate conferees have put off further talks until September. House conferees have offered a \$298.9 billion proposal that they say should be acceptable to the White House. Apparently the administration is willing to spend more than originally requested so long as the measure would not raise taxes, increase the size of the deficit or rely on federal borrowing. It should be noted that highway and transit programs are funded by fuel taxes and not from general revenues.

The House and Senate recently passed another extension of the current transportation law which extends federal highway programs through September 24, 2004, and other transportation programs through September 30, 2004.

### AUGUST LEGISLATIVE UPDATE



Congress will return to Washington after Labor Day and make a mad dash to the finish line. At this point, the "finish line" or adjournment date is tentatively set for October 1, but most observers expect it to be much later and many predict a lame duck session after the November elections.

Of foremost importance, before October 1 Congress must adopt in some form the 13 appropriations bills that keep the government operating. The House has passed ten of these bills. The remaining three have been approved by the Appropriations Committee. Only the Defense Appropriations Act has been signed into law. The Senate Appropriations Committee has approved four of the 13 bills, including the defense bill, so the committee's pace will pick up substantially in September.

Some of the other major pieces of legislation that may be considered before adjournment include broadcast decency legislation, extending child and middle class tax cuts, class action lawsuit reform, corporate tax overhaul, energy policy, highway reauthorization, Internet tax moratorium, and welfare reauthorization.



*I recently had the pleasure of touring the Bon Secour Wildlife Refuge. Pictured with me from l-r are: Jereme Phillips, Fish & Wildlife Service; my son, Robins; my daughter, Lee; Ralph Gilges, Fish & Wildlife Service volunteer; and Lynne Askins, Fish & Wildlife Service Refuge Manager.*

## 9-11 COMMISSION REPORT

Last month, at the conclusion of several months of investigation and testimony by key members of the intelligence community, current and former administrations, and representatives from all levels of state and federal government, the bipartisan 9-11 Commission issued its final report. The results of their work were released in a 567-page volume that yielded some strong recommendations for the future course that should be taken by our country and our intelligence community in protecting ourselves from further terrorist attacks.

Included in the commission's list of recommendations were a proposal to create a National Counterterrorism Center which would become the authoritative "knowledge bank" of information related to terrorist activities. Additionally, the Commission recommended the position of National Intelligence Director should be created to oversee the combined efforts of our national intelligence agencies. Finally, the Commission recommended that the administration lead the charge to convert the current information-sharing system into a decentralized network providing more information for various intelligence agencies.

At the beginning of this month, President Bush announced steps he will take with respect to these recommendations. His first objective will be to seek congressional approval for a new national intelligence director responsible for the overall coordination and oversight of our foreign and domestic intelligence organizations. Additionally, he intends to ask Congress to consider an overhaul of the process it uses for the oversight of intelligence and homeland security issues.

## ENERGY BILL REMAINS BIG QUESTION MARK



A year after power outages in the Northeast left 50 million people without power, America still lacks a new national energy policy. The history of omnibus energy legislation in the 108th Congress has been protracted. While the House passed the conference version of H.R. 6 on November 18, 2003, the Senate failed to pass the measure. Efforts to bring the bill back to the Senate floor this year were unsuccessful despite numerous efforts to revise what is considered to be a "final" conference report.

Among many controversial provisions are the overall cost of the bill, the "safe harbor" provision to protect MTBE refiners from product liability suits, electricity liability provisions, and some of the energy tax credits involved.

To emphasize its commitment, the House again debated energy legislation this summer and passed H.R. 4503, which is essentially identical to the conference version of H.R. 6 previously passed by the House, and two other bills to help move new energy projects more expeditiously.

It is virtually impossible to predict whether this issue will regain momentum in the remaining weeks of the 108th Congress. We should keep our fingers crossed that a major catastrophic power outage or other event doesn't intervene in the debate.

## From the mailbox...

*Congressman Bonner:*

*Hi, I would first off like to say thank you for keeping me informed on everything dealing with the two (2) proposed liquified natural gas (LNG) terminals. I am very pleased with your decision against the two onshore facilities.*

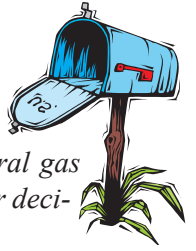
*Your decision supports the fact that the ensured safety of the citizens of Mobile, big and small, is one of your top priorities. As you already know, I am only fourteen (14) years old, and by reading and responding to my letters, you personally have made me feel like I have done my part and that you respect the feelings of not only adults, but children as well. You have also made me feel like my views and opinions played a role in the prevention of the two (2) onshore LNG terminals.*

*To me, to be fourteen (14) and feel so included in your community affairs is absolutely wonderful! Without you, none of this would have been possible. I, personally speaking, think you have done a magnificent job at listening and acting on the concerns of our citizens and our community.*

*Thank you again for making me feel important. Your generosity will never go unrecognized!*

*With kind regards,*

*Marie N. Harrington*

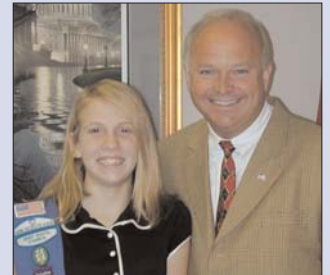


## GIRL SCOUT HALEY EVANS RECEIVES AWARD

Serving as the congressman for the First District of Alabama allows me the opportunity to meet many extraordinary people. Of all the dignitaries and important men and women I have met during the past two years, none gives me a bigger thrill than having the chance to talk with the young people here in south Alabama.

My office was recently honored to host Miss Haley Evans on a visit. Haley, a seventh grader at Fairhope's J. Larry Newton School and a member of the Girl Scouts of the Deep South Council of Mobile, was recently named as one of 104 national recipients of the prestigious Prudential Spirit of Community Award. This award is presented to middle and high school students who have demonstrated outstanding achievement in community service to their area. For her project, Haley started a program to provide entertaining activities and useful items for the residents of a local nursing home.

I know all of Haley's family and friends are extremely proud of her many accomplishments, and I am proud to see the fine example she is setting for her friends and peers in her school, her church, and her community. If Haley Evans and many others like her are any indication, the future of our state and our nation is in very good hands indeed.



*It was an honor to have Haley Evans visit with me in my Foley office.*